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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Fifty-fifth session
Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2018

Draft report of the Working Group of the Whole

1. In accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 72/77, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-fifth session, reconvened its Working Group of the Whole.

2. From 30 January to 9 February 2018, the Working Group held [...] meetings, with Mylswamy Annadurai (India) as Chair. The Working Group considered the following items:

(a) Preparations for UNISPACE+50;

(b) Space technology for sustainable socioeconomic development;

(c) Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

3. The Working Group had before it the documents listed in paragraph [A/AC.105/C.1/L.365/Add.3, para. 4.] of the report of the Subcommittee on its fifty-fifth session.

4. At its [...] meeting, on 9 February, the Working Group adopted the present report.

I. Preparations for UNISPACE+50

5. At the 1st meeting of the Working Group, on 30 January 2018, the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat informed the Working Group of the status of preparations for UNISPACE+50. In her statement, the Director underscored the readiness of the Office to work with member States and all relevant stakeholders towards UNISPACE+50 and beyond in order to build a foundation that would help define the role of space activities in both addressing overarching long-term development concerns and contributing to global efforts towards achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. At its 9th meeting, on 6 February, the Working Group heard a presentation by a representative of the Office for Outer Space Affairs regarding the organizational matters for the UNISPACE+50 high-level segment, to be held on 20 and 21 June 2018, outreach events to be held on 18 and 19 June 2018 and a dedicated exhibit on UNISPACE+50 to be held from 18 to 29 June 2018. Further information was available on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (www.unoosa.org).

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7. The Working Group took note of General Assembly resolution 72/79, in which the Assembly had emphasized the significance of the high-level segment of UNISPACE+50. The Working Group noted that, in that resolution, the General Assembly had requested the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to submit a draft resolution on the outcomes of UNISPACE+50 for consideration by the Assembly at its seventy-third session.

8. The Working Group held discussions on a draft resolution, contained in document A/AC.105/C.1/L.364 and revised in A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.16, that had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 72/79.

9. The Working Group noted that, in order to advance the work on the preparation of a draft resolution, the delegation of Canada would take the lead and organize an informal meeting before the fifty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee that would be open to participation by all States members of the Committee. The aim of the meeting would be to jointly prepare the text of a draft resolution based on the existing text (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.16), including the amendments proposed during the meetings of the Working Group of the Whole. The result of the work of that informal meeting would be presented in a working paper that could be considered by the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space at the fifty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee, to be held in Vienna from 9 to 20 April 2018. The final modalities and timing of the meeting would be conveyed to States members of the Committee by the delegation of Canada. The results of the work at the meeting would be made available by the Secretariat in an official document in all the official languages of the United Nations prior to the fifty-seventh session of the Legal Subcommittee.

10. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to facilitate the informal meeting.

11. The Working Group encouraged the lead of the informal meeting to coordinate with the Chair of the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space and the incoming Chairs of the Committee for the period 2018–2019 in order to ensure continuity and coherency in the process.

II. Space technology for sustainable socioeconomic development

12. The Working Group noted that the Expert Group on Space and Global Health had held its fourth meeting on 31 January and 1 February 2018, on the margins of the current session of the Subcommittee. The meeting had been chaired jointly by Canada and Switzerland and the principle objective of the meeting had been to review the key achievements during the implementation of the Expert Group's three-year workplan (contained in A/AC.105/1088, annex I, para. 7 (b)). The Expert Group had agreed that the objectives set forth in that workplan were realized.

13. The Working Group took note of the progress report by the Co-Chairs of the Expert Group on Space and Global Health on the fourth meeting of the Expert Group (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.17). On the basis of the recommendations contained in that report and in the final report on UNISPACE+50 thematic priority 5 (A/AC.105/1172), the Working Group agreed to establish a new item entitled "Space and global health" on the agenda of the Subcommittee, under a multi-year workplan that was to be determined.

14. The Working Group of the Whole agreed to establish a working group under that item, with Antoine Geissbühler (Switzerland) as Chair. The Working Group of the Whole also agreed that the Chair of the newly established working group, together with the Secretariat, would present to the fifty-sixth session of the Subcommittee, in 2019, a proposal for a dedicated, focused multi-year workplan for that working group, taking into account the role of the Expert Group on Space and Global Health.

III. Draft provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

15. The Working Group noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/77, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee would submit to the Committee its proposal for the draft provisional agenda for the fifty-sixth session of the Subcommittee, to be held in 2019. The Working Group agreed that the draft provisional agenda be considered by the Subcommittee under its agenda item 16.

16. The Working Group recalled that, at its sixtieth session, in 2017, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had requested the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper to be submitted to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fifty-fifth session, containing a proposed workplan on how to improve overall governance and the method of work of the Committee as a whole (A/72/20, para. 327). In that connection, the Working Group had before it a conference room paper entitled "Governance and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies: proposed workplan" (A/AC.105/C.1/2018/CRP.13).

17. On the basis of that conference room paper, the Working Group took note of the following proposed workplan and recommended that the workplan be considered by the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-seventh session, in April 2018, and further considered by the Committee at its sixty-first session, in June 2018:

2018 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, to prepare a document in all the official languages of the United Nations, in advance of the fifty-sixth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in 2019, containing a categorization of the range of organizational measures raised by delegations in sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies over the past decade and an outline of additional topics for consideration on organizational matters and the method of work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

2019 Consideration of the document at the sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, and of the Committee, under its agenda item entitled "Future role of the Committee". The work of the Working Group on the Status and Application on the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space of the Legal Subcommittee, under the multi-year workplan on UNISPACE+50 thematic priority 2, to be taken into account.

2020 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, to present a revised version of the document in all the official languages of the United Nations, taking into account the outcome of the considerations undertaken in 2019, containing concrete, action-oriented proposals for consideration by the two subcommittees and the Committee.

2021 The Secretariat, jointly with interested members of the Group of Bureaux Members, to present a second revised version of the document in all the official languages of the United Nations for final inputs by the two subcommittees. The document to be updated in all the official languages of the United Nations, for action by the Committee.